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Global Classroom Module: Pre-Planning Document

University of Maryland University College

EDTC 645

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**Summary:**

“People tell stories to teach beliefs and values to others. The oral tradition of knowledge transfer and exchange has served as the basis for education since humans began teaching one another, and digital stories build on this model by incorporating rich, dynamic media,” (Educause Learning Initiative, 2007, para. 10). By utilizing the element of storytelling and adding the element of global interaction, students will have the ability to not only interact and learn from others in another country, but also the experience of collaborating, planning, problem solving, and creating. This unit will focus on the following goals and objectives:

**Goal 1**: Students will utilize various technology tools and the Internet to improve upon written expression, elaboration, description, and organizational skills through the creation of a collaborative digital story and global collaboration with ePals.

**Objective A:** Given an online organizational tool (Bubbl.us),“Students will identify a topic, brainstorm ideas around that topic and write a personal narrative,” (ePals, 2010) with 90% accuracy.

**Objective B:** Given an online writing space (Wikispaces) and global ePal collaboration, students will be able to collaboratively engage in the writing process to create a clear, organized, and detailed script for a digital story with 90% accuracy.

**Goal 2:** Students will demonstrate an understanding and application story/plot elements and organization through the creation of a collaborative digital story and global collaboration with ePals.

**Objective A:** Given the use of ePals, “Students will understand that digital storytelling is an effective way to have their voices heard and make a meaningful connection with others,” (ePals, 2010) with 90%.

**Objective B:** Given the use of digital plot jots, students will share, reflect, and apply story/plot elements collaboratively within their group and with their ePal with 90% accuracy.

**Goal 3:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of how sounds, images, and music (Mood and Tone) affect a storyline through the creation of a digital story and global collaboration with an ePal.

**Objective A:** Given the use of iMovie and FreePlayMusic.com, “Students will be able to apply and demonstrate their understanding of digital storytelling. They will translate their words and images into a digital story in such a way that others will understand or appreciate their point of view,” (ePals, 2010) through the creation of collaborative images and insertion of sound and music with 90% accuracy.

**Objective B:** Given the use of ArtPad, “Students will demonstrate an understanding of the role images play in a story and will create or find appropriate images to support their story,” (ePals, 2010) students will create collaborative images to “tell” their digital story with 90% accuracy.

**Goal 4:** “Students will communicate and work collaboratively with peers, teachers, and ePals,” (ePals, 2010).

**Objective A:** Given the use of a daily reflective group log, students will collaboratively work together to identify goals and reflect upon daily work to complete the project in a timely manner with 100% accuracy.

**Objective B:** Given the use of ePals and online reflective journal (Wikispaces), students will engage in deep reflection of learning and apply concepts when discussing or collaborating with ePals or composing the final reflection journal with 90% accuracy.

**School and Student Background:**

The school district that I am currently teaching at is comprised of a total of 1,035 students and services grades K-8. The middle school that I currently teach at services grades six through eight with a student population of 350. Out of the 350 students, 7.7% of the total population is identified as having an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and 1.7% as LEP (Limited English Proficient). My classroom is made up of many diverse students. While the sixth grade is comprised of about 120 students, they are split for English Language Arts. The middle school operates on a modified block schedule with a six-day cycle, but English Language Arts is every day versus other content areas that occur every other day. Because of the schedule, I teach about 60 students, and the other 60 students are taught by another sixth grade English Language Arts Teacher. Although we are two separate teachers, we engage in team planning and provide the same experiences for all students, so that when they enter the seventh grade they have a common experience. Furthermore, the special education students are rotated from year to year. For example, last year I taught the In-Class Support class, and this year my colleague is teaching the class. That does not mean, however, that within my own classroom I do not have varying learning abilities. Within my classroom, I have four students with 504s and one student who is identified as LEP (Limited English Proficiency) with her native language being Italian. In addition, through the use of iReady software used for student skill data mining, I have about 20 students who are below proficiency levels in various contexts of English Language Arts such as vocabulary development, reading in context, comprehension, etc. Furthermore, my school has access various forms of technology that include a laptop cart with ten Macbooks (Specifically for the sixth grade English Language Arts team. There are other laptops and research labs available within the school), digital cameras, an iPad lab, video cameras, and various software applications. Finally, at the beginning of the school year, I conduct a survey to analyze if all my students have access to technology at home. This year, 100% of my students have access to their own laptop or a family computer that can be utilized for completing homework assignments.

**Time Frame:**

The time frame of this unit will envelop a four to six week period. This will allow students to work collaboratively within their groups in addition to collaborating and communicating with their assigned ePal during the duration of the unit. Because I see my students every day for eighty-two minutes, the project will be spread across four to six weeks the project will be integrated into daily classroom procedures for about 30-40 minutes a day. During this time, direct teaching may take place, group collaboration and development, or ePal communication (The actual time frame may need to be adjusted pending how both sets of students are progressing. That is why there an extra week or so has been added to the development and or planning of the unit so that both collaborators and students can be flexible and not feel “rushed”).

**Subject and Grade Level:** Sixth Grade English Language Arts

**Proposed Topic and Rationale:**

The topic of this project is “A Day in the Life” story. By participating in this collaborative project, students will be able to describe “A Day in the Life” of a sixth grader who lives in Northern New Jersey. Within collaborative groups, students will plan a story that describes daily happenings and occurrences. This could include amalgamating group ideas into various topics that create one story to include all student ideas. Once students have participated in the various aspects of the unit they will share their videos with another group of students located in another country. They will be able to compare and contrast lifestyles, which will make them not only increasingly globally aware of other people and cultures, but also day-to-day living. Finally, this project seeks to improve written expression, collaboration, organization, story/plot development skills through the creation of a digital story that uses images (digital, group created, or both), sound, and music to convey tone and mood while telling a complete story from beginning to end.

**Global Network:** ePals

**Key Challenges:**

Some of the key challenges with regards to this unit are:

1. ePal Communication and Planning with the Other Teacher: I am concerned that the lapse in time with the other teacher located in another country will not allow myself or my colleague to communicate effectively. One way to overcome this solution is to exchange personal emails in addition to ePals. This may open up more avenues of communication. In addition, flexibility is key. If a day’s lesson doesn’t go as planned, we will need to work together to ensure that our students can engage in meaningful ePal collaboration.
2. ePal Communication with Students: What if there is a lapse in student communication? What if a student from the other class does not respond to one of my students? How will we deal with students who are absent to ensure communication between ePals occurs? One way to try to avoid these issues to plan with the other teacher. If Plan A does not work, what will be our Plan B? If students are absent from class and could not engage in communication, students would be given time during the school day or after school to communicate with their ePal. In addition, if students can access the Internet at home, they could also complete the assignment at home. Flexibility is key. There is no guarantee that everything will run smoothly, but with effective planning and communication, myself and the other teacher will be able to “roll with the punches” and adjust as needed for the needs of our classes and students.
3. ePal Monitoring: I am a bit worried about making sure my students follow netiquette, in addition to, making sure I understand how to monitor my students’ ePal communications. One way to solve this issue is to enlist the help of my technology supervisor. He can provide some training to me in this area so that I feel comfortable when I implement the unit. I can also create a mini netiquette lesson for my students prior to their first email collaboration with their ePal so they understand the importance of proper communication through email and can apply that to their writing.

**Prior Knowledge:**

My students will have acquired prior knowledge of story/plot development through the use of literature study and Problem-Based Learning activities that occurred before the integration of this lesson. However, this lesson will challenge students to go beyond identifying a story’s beginning, middle, and end. Students will have to utilize the parts of a plot chart (Exposition, Inciting Incident, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution) as part of planning their story. They will have encountered these terms before the beginning of the project, but they will have to collaboratively apply them through the creation of “A Day in the Life,” digital story. In addition, students will need to create a script, but the script of the movie will need to integrate mood and tone. Students will need to apply understandings of how mood and tone affect the progression and telling of a story. Finally, reflective journals, and ePal communications will analyze individual written expression. These skills are cumulative as they build upon new skills throughout the school year.

To assess whether my students have the required knowledge, a pretest will be given in the form of an iReady assessment in addition to a reading comprehension assessment that will include an open-ended response for students to complete. The use of iReady will allow me to analyze student proficiencies as it relates to standards. In addition, the reading comprehension/open-ended pre-assessment will allow me to analyze if students are applying writer’s craft in addition to identifying various parts of a plot as they occur in a short story. Based upon these results, I can restructure my teaching to ensure that students are equipped with the skills necessary for the “A Day in the Life” ePal Digital Story Unit.

**Content Standards:**

[**Common Core State Standards for ELA (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010):**](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)

RL.6.3, W.6.3a, W.6.3b, W.6.3c, W.6.3d, W.6.3e, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.6, W.6.10, SL.6.1a, SL.6.1b, SL.6.1c, SL.6.1d, SL.6.2, SL.6.5, L.6.1e, L.6.2a, L.6.2b, L.6.3a, L.6.3b, L.6.

[**National English Standards, (NCTE, 2012):**](http://www.ncte.org/standards/ncte-ira)

4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12

**Technology Standards:**

[**National Educational Technology Standards for Students (ISTE, 2007):**](http://www.iste.org/Libraries/PDFs/NETS-S_Standards.sflb.ashx)

1. Creativity and Innovation: a and b
2. Communication and Collaboration: a, b, c, and d
3. N/A
4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making: a and b
5. Digital Citizenship: a, b, c, d, and e
6. Technology Operations and Concepts: a, b, and c

**Global Theme:**

After reviewing the American Forum for Global Education’s (2003) ten categories for global issues, it has been determined that the “A Day in the Life” ePal Unit will envelope the following global theme: Race and Ethnicity: Human Commonality and Diversity. Through the “A Day in the Life” Unit, students will be able to learn about others with others. They will be able to see what life is like through the eyes of peers their age who create and tell a story. In addition, through ePal communication emails, students will also gain a better understanding and sensitivity to others that are different from whom they are. “Most of the sources consulted feel this topic should be studied by all students…In most cases, reducing prejudice, avoiding stereotypes, or eliminating discrimination are listed as the goal for such studied. Others stressed celebrating diversity or enhancing students’ self-image/concept as the primary goal,” (The American Forum for Global Education, 2003, para. 35).

**Pre-Lesson Steps:**

The following steps are necessary to connect with another classroom and teacher prior to introducing the lesson to my students:

1. Meet with my technology coordinator to discuss if parent approval is needed through the use of permission slips. If so, I will distribute permission slips immediately to my students for parental review, signature, and return to my classroom.
2. Meet with my technology coordinator to effectively set up student profiles and to make sure I understand how to apply and use the ePal technology meaningfully in my classroom. Concepts that will be reviewed are security, student account setup, email monitoring, and any other general questions I may have prior to searching for a classroom and teacher to work with on the site.
3. Use my account on ePals and complete my classroom profile.
4. Post a note in the Digital Storytelling Unit forum to find a teacher and group of students to work with. Within my posting, I will try to provide a brief but detailed overview of the unit I would like to integrate into my classroom.
5. After I have received a response, I will begin collaboration with my colleague in another country to effectively plan the Unit over the course of six weeks. This will include the creation of and distribution of materials so that all students will have the same experience.

**Technology Use:**

Technology will be integrated into this unit to assist in student learning in the following ways:

1. Access to a laptop cart with ten MacBooks. Collaborative Groups will be given two laptops each. When emailing ePals, teacher will obtain an additional laptop cart so that all students have their own laptop to be able to communicate and collaborate effectively.
2. Integration of Bubbl.us an organizational software program where students can brainstorm story ideas within their collaborative groups.
3. Usage of wikispaces for students to develop their “A Day in the Life” digital story in a safe digital writing space. Group members will be able to access this information inside and outside of school.
4. Usage of ArtPad, digital cameras, or both. Working in collaborative groups, students will utilize completed stories and identify and or create images to tell their story. The images can be created through the use of ArtPad, taken with digital images, and or an integration of both. Students will need to think of powerful images to tell their collaborative story.
5. Mood and Tone. Students will utilize FreePlay Music and iMovie sounds to enhance the mood and tone of their “A Day in the Life” digital story.

**Essential Questions:**

Students will be able to answer the following questions successfully as a measure of whether or not the unit was effective:

1. How does plot development affect the descriptiveness of a story?
2. How do the use of images and sound affect the tone and mood of a story?
3. “Why do people tell stories,” (ePals, 2010)?
4. “How is my personal story the same or different from others,” (ePals, 2010)?
5. “How is digital storytelling the same as traditional storytelling? How is it different,” (ePals, 2010)?

**Starting Activity for Module (“Hook”):**

Teacher will pose a question to students: Can images tell a story? Students sit in a fishbowl while they examine The Snowman by Raymond Briggs. After looking at the pictures (class is not allowed to talk during this time), they will break into collaborative groups and fill out a plot chart to see if in fact images can tell a story. After the class has discussed as a whole group, the teacher will hand each student a blank sheet of paper. Teacher will play a short musical song where students need to identify the meaning of the words mood and tone through the creation of an image. Once the song is over, students will share the pictures they created during the song in addition to identifying the definition of mood and tone. Next, the teacher will show students a self-created iMovie using images and the same music from earlier in the class. Collaboratively, students will work together to fill in a plot chart for the teacher’s iMovie. Students and teacher will discuss plot charts, images, mood, and tone. Finally, the teacher will simulate global learning by showing a sample of a student-made digital story from the ePal website. Students will have to compare and contrast how the teacher story and the sample ePal story are similar and different? Did they both tell a story? What is different about one movie from the other? Do you want to know more about one movie other the other? Why? Students will be able to share reactions and response that they have written in their journals.

**Summary of Two Lesson Plans:**

**Lesson Plan 1:** Plot/Story Development

**Do Now:** Students will work in collaborative groups. Each group will view a different student generated digital story from the ePals website. Groups will be required to collaboratively complete a story/plot diagram and present the information to the class. Teacher will lead discussion in aiding students to compare and contrast the various digital stories. Students will respond to a teacher posed in the journals.

**Content:**

* Working in collaborative groups, students will be given a folder that contains the following items: a daily journal log, job descriptions, directions, and a plot diagram. Students will complete a portion of their daily journal log by identifying goals and assigning jobs.
* Using a collaborative writing space, collaborative groups will use wikispaces to being to create a diagram of their “Day in the Life” story. They will map out their ideas according to plot/story development. Depending on progression of students, this may take one or two class sessions.
* Students will communicate with ePal (Email #2) and compose answers to the following questions taken from the ePal (2010) Digital Storytelling Classroom Project:
  + “Tell your ePal what type of story you are planning to tell.”
  + Share several story ideas from your group and tell your ePal which one you and your group have decided upon. Explain why this was your final choice (The second question was adapted and adjusted from the ePal project).
  + Response to ePal previous communication.
* Students will complete their daily group log by reflecting upon the day’s work. Did the group meet their goals? How well did everyone work together? What could be done differently to improve tomorrow?

**Formative Assessment:**

* Teacher Group Observation
* Journal Compositions
* Collaborative Group Journal
* Wikispace Collaboration
* ePal Communication

**Summative Assessment:** See below for summative assessment.

**Differentiated Instruction:**

The assignment will be differentiated based upon student strengths and weaknesses as identified from pre-assessment work. The teacher will make modifications to assignments as necessary based upon student performance. For example a higher level learner, may be asked to revise and edit to include specific details that support main ideas and a lower level learner may be asked to create a paragraph that has five sentences (topic sentence, three supporting details, and a concluding sentence). The teacher will be able to work with these students when they are in collaborative groups or when they are communicating with their ePal directly.

**Lesson Plan 2:** It’s Storyboard Time: Translation…Images and Sound

**Do Now:** Students will engage in a Round Robin activity that requires them to travel around the classroom to view text. During this activity, students must not speak to each other, but utilize the various six stations (plot development connection to their collaborative work from the day before) to identify images, sounds, and music that could convey what the text is talking about. Students will write responses within their journals. This activity will also work on sequencing. After students have visited each of the six stations, they will need to identify the order for the texts so that they tell a short mini-story. For example, a sample text could read, “During the day, I have six classes that I go to. Each class is for eighty-two minutes, and I have to leave my other books in my locker.” From this statement, students will identify what type of images, sounds, and music could convey this message. Students will share responses and teacher will lead discussion while showing a mini digital movie that has put all of the text in order but has supplemented the text with images, sounds, and music.

**Content:**

* Students will meet with collaborative groups and complete a portion of their collaborative group journal. They will identify goals for today’s session and assign jobs to each group member.
* Students will utilize wikispaces to print out their story/plot development chart so they can refer to it for the following activity. Students will utilize wikispaces to complete a storyboard chard. Here students will collaboratively work together to translate text to image and sound. Depending on progression of students, this may take one or two class sessions.
* Students will communicate with ePal (Email #4) and compose answers to the following questions taken from the ePal (2010) Digital Storytelling Classroom Project:
  + Discuss with your ePal how images can be important in a digital story. Tell your ePal some of your group’s ideas about how to make your story better with images (The first question was adapted and adjusted from the ePal project).
  + “Was it difficult or easy to figure out how to use a storyboard? Do you think a storyboard is helpful when creating a digital story? Why or why not?
  + Response to ePal previous communications.
* Students will complete their daily group log by reflecting upon the day’s work. Did the group meet their goals? How well did everyone work together? What could be done differently to improve tomorrow?

**Formative Assessment:**

* Teacher Observation
* Journal Compositions
* Collaborative Group Journal
* Wikispace Collaboration
* ePal Communications

**Summative Assessment:** See below for summative assessment.

**Differentiated Instruction:**

The assignment will be differentiated based upon student strengths and weaknesses as identified from pre-assessment work. The teacher will make modifications to assignments as necessary based upon student performance. For example a higher level learner, may be asked to utilize more specific descriptive details when identifying images and sound and a lower level learner may be asked identify the main idea of the text and think of one image and sound to support it. The teacher will be able to work with these students when they are in collaborative groups or when they are communicating with their ePal directly.

**Project Summative Assessment:**

The final assessment of the Global Classroom Module will include the creation of and sharing of movies on ePals with our collaborative classroom, ePal communications, and the final reflection journal that, students will write on their individual wikispace writing portfolio. Two rubrics will be developed. One will focus on the final product: the “A Day in the Life” Story and will be a collaborative grade. The other grade will be an individual grade that will analyze email collaborations and reflection journals through application of curricular and global concepts such as writing instruction and global awareness.

* Summative Assessment Breakdown: Two Rubrics
  + A Day in the Life: collaborative writing and planning, daily group logs, technology use, etc. (Collaborative Grade)
  + Journal Compositions, ePal Communications, and Reflective Journal (Individual Grade)

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